

**Teacher's Guide to Accompany:**

*The Feverbird's Claw*

by Jane Kurtz

Guide created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer

**Teacher's Guide for**  
***The Feverbird's Claw* by Jane Kurtz**

**Note from the author, Jane Kurtz:**

When I was a kid, I loved reading fantasy--fairy tales, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (which I was introduced to through a read-aloud by a teacher in my fourth grade class), *Winnie the Pooh* (first read aloud to me by my mom), *Charlotte's Web*, and other books where things happened I had never seen in my world. Since I was growing up in an isolated corner of Ethiopia, I was experiencing a lot of interesting things that hardly any other Americans had ever seen. It was easy for me to imagine that fantastic other worlds existed where dolls and spiders talked and where amazing creatures lived. After I became an author, I put my interests, memories, and research together in *The Feverbird's Claw*. Moralin and Figt's civilizations operate the way other ancient civilizations really did. When Moralin has to learn a new language, I used my memories of how my family gradually learned Amharic, one of Ethiopia's 80 languages. And Moralin's journey is not too different from my own--having sometimes scary adventures in remote places, trying to unlock the secrets of what the adults around me weren't explaining, and struggling to get home, not realizing how hard it would be, surrounded by people who hadn't seen or experienced anything like what I had.

**Comprehension Check**

1. Without looking at the *The Feverbird's Claw* flap copy, write one which you think would best represent the important aspects of the book.
2. Name the five most important characters in the story and what they contributed to Moralin's quest.
3. Describe in your own words what Moralin learns by the end of the story about herself and her people.
4. What are some ways this story would have been different if told through the eyes of Figt? Provide a summary through her eyes.
5. How do you think you would act if you were kidnapped and taken far from home? Who do you think you were most like in the story? Why?
6. Compare and contrast Figt and Moralin. (You may use a Venn diagram)
7. Compare and contrast the Delagua and Akera peoples.
8. Who do you think acted most honorably in the story? Why?
9. In the end, would you have chosen the same path as Moralin? Why or why not?
10. How would you describe the religion of the Delagua city? Can you make connections with anything you've learned about the ancient Greeks, ancient Egyptians, or other cultures? How about your own?

**Projects across the curriculum:**

Language Arts:

Jane Kurtz, author of *The Feverbird's Claw*, has often been praised for her strong, precise language, one of the “Six Traits” of effective writing. Make a list of “Jane’s juicy words” in one chapter. Choose one important scene and list how many of the five senses Jane Kurtz used. Finally, find examples of ten vivid verbs in the novel. Write a paragraph of your own that uses four of them.

Art:

- Create a landscape miniature of one of the places Moralin describes. It should be 3D but can be made with any material you choose.
- Use artistic materials to create the Delagua flag, the animals in the story: skulkuk, beastie, garrag and so on, or Moralin’s closet at home.

Music and Drama:

- Choose one of the scenes around the fire--either the one in the Arkeria camp or the one where Moralin walks on coals. Create percussion music for the background that captures the mood at different times in the scene.

DVD Extra Scenes

- Pretend that the DVD release of the movie of *The Feverbird's Claw* just came out and you will act out scenes that did not make the final version of the movie. This, too, can be done in small groups of no more than three. Be sure to keep dialogue in the tone of the original!

Social Studies:

- In the beginning of the novel is a map of Moralin’s journey. Make a map of her mental journey. Include the points where her mind has to make a choice between two roads--the old way of thinking and the new.
- Students could research incidents in history where an individual was captured by another group and then assimilated into the “new” culture.
- How do you think they would relate to their original identity if they were brought back. Are there any incidences of this?

Current affairs:

- Have a debate in class on this issue:  
Which is more important:
  - To consider yourself a citizen of the world and expect your government to consider how their decisions affect all people. or
  - Is it more important to consider yourself a citizen of your country or tribe and loyalty (and therefore all decisions) should be made to consider their needs first (or only).

Research one of the following topics:

- The history of the silkworm
- How languages are related cave-dwelling societies
- Worldwide tribal customs for coming of age ceremonies
- Coal walking
- Attitudes toward dogs and other pets in different societies

### **Reading Comprehension lessons and activities:**

Many of the following activities and lessons are based on the fabulous book by Chris Tovani- *I Read It But I Don't Get It* (a must read for teachers trying to improve their students comprehension whether they are reading instructors or not!).

### **Prediction Guide**

Great readers keep themselves involved in the story while they're reading by making predictions about what they think may happen next. They look for clues to help them make these guesses. Often though the author deliberately tries to surprise the reader (which is half the fun of reading, don't you think?) with extra details that may not turn out to be critical. As you read *The Feverbird's Claw* answer these questions AS YOU GO and don't worry whether your answers are right or not. Also, create at least one prediction or question by the end of each chapter with one of these phrases, "I wonder whether..." "I think that Moralin will probably..."

"I think the next obstacle may be..."

(Teachers: these questions would be ideal for modeling how to make prediction question if you're reading *The Feverbird's Claw* aloud to your class. Encourage students to make text-text, text-self, text-world connections to support their predictions.

### **Prediction Questions**

#### Chapter 1

1. What do you think the last sentence means?
2. What role might the shadows of the city play in the story?

#### Chapter 2

1. Will Moralin and the other girls manage to escape? How?
2. What do you think is the beast with Fig? Do you think it might be important to the story?

#### Chapter 3

1. Make a guess what each of Cora Linga's clues could mean.
2. How soon, if ever, will Moralin get away from the Arkera?

#### Chapter 4

1. Will Song-maker help her escape? How?
2. Why might the two languages being similar be an important detail?

#### Chapter 5

1. What will she need the white flower for?
2. How will the skulkuk's attack change the journey?

#### Chapter 6

1. Whose voice is it? What will happen next?
2. Will there be more monsters? Describe one.

#### Chapter 7

1. Why do you think the Arkera are always moving?
2. Will she ever see Figt or Song-maker again? If so, when?

#### Chapter 8

1. What will happen next?
2. What could Moralin do that would bring shame to her people? Will she?

#### Chapter 9

1. What things does Moralin learn or remember in this chapter that might help her save her people?
2. Will Ooden help her escape? Why or why not.

#### Chapter 10

1. Can you guess what might be making Ooden so afraid?
2. Moralin conquers fear on the coals--how might she use that technique again?

#### Chapter 11

1. How do you think Ooden's secret path might play into the story?
2. What is the meaning of the old woman's warning?

#### Chapter 12

1. What does the last sentence mean?
2. What makes you think they will or won't track her down?

#### Chapter 13

1. Is something really following her? What is it?
2. What kind of strategy could she craft to get back home?

#### Chapter 14

1. Will they turn around or go forward? What makes you think so?
2. What kinds of monsters or other obstacles might they face?

#### Chapter 15

1. What might the sand dwellers be like?
2. What kinds of things will they have to solve in the desert?

#### Chapter 16

1. Moralin says small things change a whole life. What might have changed for her if she manages to get back home?
2. Will she risk her own life to help Figt? Why or why not?

#### Chapter 17

1. Who or what else will they run into next?
2. What will the Delagua do with Figt if they manage to get in the city?

#### Chapter 18

1. What might save her? Does her journey out give any clues?
2. What will happen next?

#### Chapter 19

1. Why might Song-maker be planning to use them in trade?
2. Did Song-maker betray them? Why or why not?

#### Chapter 20

1. How might they find their way again without a map?
2. What might Moralin have to face because she got them lost?

#### Chapter 21

1. What will Moralin do with what she learned about the Shadows?
2. How will Old Tamlin act if she gets back to the city?
3. Will she be able to climb the wall? How?

#### Chapter 22

1. How might the voice on the cliff play into the story?
2. What might happen to Figt inside the city?

#### Chapter 23

1. Will Moralin hurt the soldier or the other way around? Why?
2. What do you think the mask design might be useful for?

#### Chapter 24

1. What strategy might they try next to find Figt's brother?
2. How will Moralin's family react when she goes home?

#### Chapter 25

1. What could possibly save their lives?
2. What might Old Tamlin's vision that she would save the city mean?

#### Chapter 26

1. What do you think Figt's brother will look like if they find him? Is there any way to recognize him?
2. What might Moralin decide about her temple service after seeing inside the secret rooms?

#### Chapter 27

1. Why do you think Moralin took a cocoon from the temple?
2. How could she help free the Shadows?

#### Chapter 28

1. What do you think happens after the close of the story?

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### **Establishing a purpose while reading**

Good readers always know why they are reading. They ask questions and wonder about the story even when they haven't been assigned a particular purpose from a teacher. When you're reading fantasy it is important to understand the nature of the new world as quickly as you can. So read chapters one and two and be sure to notice and rules or clues about Moralin's society. Find at least five rules, making a note of the quote and page # as you read. Speculate, too, on why that information could be important. Ex. "Only the highborn were allowed to wear silk" p. 8 Prediction: Maybe Moralin will be confused with a lowborn person if she doesn't have her silk dress on.

### **Monitoring Comprehension**

Keep a double entry diary for two chapters. Fold a page lengthwise in half. On one side write down a quote and page number from the text, on the other, jot down a connection, ask a question, make a comment, or finish this phrase, "I got confused at this point because..."

Fill out this chart as you read with at least ten examples. This chart would work well over a large section of the novel, perhaps as many as ten chapters. You might want to do one chapter together as a "think-aloud" in class first.

## Making Connections

Chapter &	Text to text	Text to self	Text to world
Definitions:	Tell how this book reminds you of another in plot, content, style or structure	Relate what you just read to an experience or memory from your own life	Show how the book relates to events from the real world, or facts and info. that you know
Examples:	Old Tamlin reminds me of El Patron from <u>The House of the Scorpion</u> because he is a flawed and believable leader.	p. 25 "Moralin spit the food out and curled in a ball" After a long march like she endured, I would eat nearly anything.	p. 22 kidnapping of Moralín and others- reminds me of civilians being kidnapped in Iraq war on the news.



## Fix-up strategies for The Feverbird's Claw

### Questioning:

Write “I wonder” notes back and forth with a friend about the book. Don’t give away anything if you move faster than your partner, but respond and question what you think may happen and why. Turn in at least three letters and three responses.

### Visualizing & Character Confusion:

Casting: Sometimes it helps to picture characters as famous actors. Make a list of the main characters and who would play their part in the Hollywood version. Also, create a chart about the characters. List their names, their tribe, unique characteristics, their goals, their strengths, their weaknesses, and why they are important to the story.

### Wandering Mind:

As you read one chapter put a star in the margin (or a post it note if it is a school text) each time your mind wanders way off topic. Then read one more chapter but before you start make a purpose for reading first (ex. I’m going to see if Ooden will help Moralin escape) and again mark when your mind wanders with the stars. Finally, compare the two chapters and see which one has more stars. In a short journal (or be prepared to discuss in class) the results and why you think you got them.

### Retell:

Right after reading each chapter write a brief (and I mean post it note size) summary of what happened.

Teacher’s guide provided by: [www.TracieVaughnZimmer.com](http://www.TracieVaughnZimmer.com)  
Visit this author’s website to find more.

## BEFORE AND AFTER

### HOW TO USE THE ORGANIZER

Either provide students with a list of vocabulary you'd like to focus on from *The Feverbird's Claw*, or allow them to choose words as they read the text and record them in the left hand column. Ask them to tell what knowledge they had about the word before reading. Risk-taking and predictions should be encouraged! After reading the words in context, have students record their understanding of the words and discuss how their definitions broadened by its context.

Before and After

Word	Before Reading	After Reading

Knowledge Rating lesson and graphic designed by educational consultant and author Jennifer Richard Jacobson. Visit <<http://www.jenniferjacobson.com>> and find more great resources for teaching!